America has always been the vanguard of individual expression, and individual success. Throughout the ages this country has become known as the land of opportunity, where immigrants and the wealthy all get the same chance for change and happiness. The American dream undoubtedly breeds competition and conflict, but without this open competition, America looses something that sets us apart from much of the world. As the years go by, competition seems to be ebbing away in America, with more government regulation controlling our businesses and Affirmative Action which requires the hiring, and college acceptance of certain ethnic groups. Competition has always been the engine behind the economy, but competition is in dire straits. The most recent blow to the bastion of the free market comes from an unlikely source, the removal of class rank in many of our nation’s high schools.

Class rank is a means by which a high school compares its students among the class. Fairview High School uses a point system, based on percentage grades in classes, to determine class rank. Fairview recently implemented a new policy regarding class rank. The freshman class of 2012 will not be receiving their class ranks on their report cards. My sister, who is a freshman, seemed rather dismayed that she would not be able to compare herself effectively to other members of her class. Although that may have been what the school district was trying to avoid (students feeling the need to compare themselves to others) removing all means of comparative measure will negatively affect the competitive spirit of America.

Class rank may not be an “important factor in getting acceptance to college,” but many colleges will generally incorporate class rank into the decision process. Many colleges end up recreating a “class rank” if high schools don’t provide it. This proves to be an inconvenience for many colleges, which may affect acceptance. If the school does not offer enough statistics about the graduating senior class, many college admissions officers have to give more weight to standardized tests. These standardized tests do not always accurately portray a student’s capabilities. Many college deans abhor the current trend. Admissions officers need a comparative benchmark where “grades are put in perspective.” High schools should always provide class ranks, because it allows colleges to make more informed decisions.

Detractors of class rank may say that it breeds too much undue conflict and drama in the already emotional high school days.